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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA-RUSSIA MILITARY EXERCISE

1. Summary: The Taipei dailies gave extensive coverage August 23 to the 17-hour riot by Thai workers in Kaohsiung and the Government Information Office's (GIO) clarification regarding its delay in distributing to local charity groups the money collected for last December's tsunami relief efforts. All the major Chinese-language newspapers in Taiwan, however, also reported on the Ministry of National Defense's move to transfer NT\$7 billion from the special budget for the U.S. arms procurement bill to Taiwan's regular annual budget. The pro-unification "United Daily News" ran an exclusive news story on its front page that was topped with the headline: "Aborigine passports are altered en masse." The sub-headline added: "A cross-national ring purchases I.D. cards from possibly 'over a thousand' aborigines [residing] in Hualien and Taitung, uses them to apply for passports and sells them at a high price to mainland Chinese being trafficked [to other countries]. U.S. and Canadian governments express concern [about this]."

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, most newspapers editorialized on the GIO's failure to efficiently handle the relief money collected for helping tsunami victims. Professor Yang Yung-ming of National Taiwan University commented on the China-Russia military exercises in an op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily," noting that China's strategic intent to use military force to maintain its national interest and position in the region is very clear. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said the Sino-Russia military exercises constitute an act inimical to peace and security in Northeast Asia and will inevitably intensify military competition in the region. End summary.

A) "China and Russia Want to Establish a Security Protection System"

Yang Yung-ming, professor of political science at National Taiwan University, commented in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 570,000] (8/23):

". The joint Sino-Russia military exercises do not represent a military alliance between the two countries, but the drills did manifest multiple significances in various aspects such as weaponry, tactics, strategy and politics. Any judgment made from a single perspective cannot define the big picture as a whole. One thing is certain, though -- namely, China's strategic intent to use military [force] to maintain its national interest and position in the region is very clear. The political and military interaction and cooperation between China and Russia will likely enter a new stage in the Sino-Russia security protection system, and in the future, the security strategy situation in East Asia will no longer be single-handedly controlled by the United States. These are the new situations that Taiwan needs to acknowledge and encounter."

B) "China Signals Ambitions in Joint War Games"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (8/23):

". The most worrisome aspect of the exercises is that they constitute a major indication that China's strategy of economic opening is being transformed into a strategy of cross-border projection of military force.

"In contrast to Moscow's cautious decision to avoid the sensitive Taiwan Strait, Beijing clearly intended to manifest its capabilities to project force not only eastward toward Taiwan and the East China Sea through simulation of blockade actions, but also showed its

potential to intervene in the Central Asia region comprised by the five country Shanghai Cooperation Organization. .

"There can be little doubt that the decision to hold the joint exercises aims to display China's military muscles to neighboring countries, notably Japan and Taiwan, and indirectly, the United States. .

"In sum, the holding of the joint exercises constitutes an act inimical to peace and security in Northeast Asia and will inevitably intensify military competition in the region.

"The display of PRC military prowess with advanced offensive Russian-made weaponry also sends a sobering message to Taiwanese citizens and politicians about the necessity and urgency of upgrading our own defensive preparations."

KEEGAN